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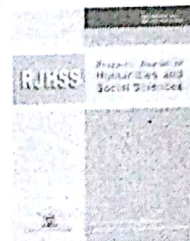


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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Blending of History and Fantasy in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh with reference to the Ibis Trilogy

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ABSTRACT:

The Ibis trilogy, written by Amitav Ghosh consists of three books. The first is 'Sea of Poppies', second is 'The River of Smoke' and third one is 'Flood of Fire'. All his books are on opium war and impact of war. There is blending of high seriousness and low humour in the account of events before or during opium wars. The history of fanqui town in Canton has been fascinating, written as a mysterious civilization that has just begun to locate corruption. In the novels of Ghosh, we find a sense of historical reality in terms of time and space, forming an integral part of work of art, achieving wider dimensions of universality. Most of his novels are on the theme of displacement, race-relations and reidentifications. Knowledge is produced by structures of dominance particularly. The military, economic strategies of colonialism, of border lines, between nations, genres. In his novels he examines at least one form of knowledge in colonial power structures. The study of Amitav Ghosh's novels is an opportunity not only to pursue the issue of post-colonialized subalterns but also to view history with novel perspectives.

KEYWORDS: *Opium, Poppies, Colonialism, Subalterns, China, Calcutta, Canton.*

INTRODUCTION:

The Ibis trilogy written by Amitav Ghosh consists of three books. The first one is *Sea of poppies*, the second is the *River of Smoke* and the third one is *Flood of Fire*. *Sea of Poppies* is set in Bengal. On the eve of the opium wars while the *River of Smoke* continues the story and takes the action forward to same opium destination, the Chinese trading outpost of Canton. Ibis trilogy is his most ambition worth with third book *Flood of Fire*. Ibis trilogy is gigantic piece of work totaling about 1700 pages, with dozens of principle characters from very diverse background, moving from Bihar to China to Mauritius with the British opium trade in the 1830 to the first opium war in China as the backdrop. Ghosh has created characters and portrayed each and every minute details so accurately that it leaves behind a lingering sense of familiarity.

'The Ibis trilogy (Ibis is the name of the ship on which most of the characters find themselves at one time or another.) wows us 19th century Bhojpuri songs, minute details at opium cultivation, Chinese society and culture of peculiar language of Laskars,(Sailors) Botany, the engineering details of ships and intricacies of sailing them on high seas. The Indianization of the English spoken by East India company officials, Parsi customs and even early 19th century pornography'¹¹

Life and career:

Amitav Ghosh, born in Calcutta on July 11, 1956 in Bengali Hindu family, got his education at the Doon school, St. Stephen College, Delhi, Delhi school of Economics and St. Edmund Hall oxford. He was awarded D. Phil in social anthropology by St. Edmund Hall oxford. He joined as an editor at the Indian express newspaper in New Delhi. He is the fellow of the Centre for student in social sciences, Calcutta. He worked as a faculty at Queens College, City University of New York as well as visiting professor to English Department of Harvard University since 2005. He was awarded